

# SAGEBRUSH HEADLIGHT

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THE NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM  
An Agency of the Division of Museums and History  
Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs

Spring 2007

## THE LAST AMERICAN: A Personal Odyssey

### *What a Pile of Stuff*

By Dan Markoff. Photos by the author.

I did learn a lot from that clock. When I took *Eureka* apart I made copious notes, took hundreds of photographs, marked all the parts and stored them. But when you take something the size of *Eureka* apart, it takes up an amazing amount of space. Anyone thinks a locomotive is large ought to see it when its component pieces are lying all over the place. There are the smoke box ring and door, two domes, the bell, driving rods, connecting rods, ash pan, old tubes, the dry pipe, cab parts, injectors, lubricator, pistons, cylinder covers, eccentrics, links and an unbelievable amount of pipes that come off the engine. There was all this stuff everywhere and the boiler was still taking up an enormous amount of area sitting on its running gear. I had not even thought about taking the tender apart yet. To get around my shop, you could not walk. I had to sort of hop here and there.



Now that I had all these things apart, it was time to evaluate it all and repair what needed repairing. Many of the items removed would simply have to be replaced, such as the ash pan. Sometime in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the railroad had converted the locomotive from wood to oil. Since I was to rebuild *Eureka* to burn her original fuel of wood, I could see that a wood-burning ash pan and grates needed to be built along with grate bearers.

Since I had already built the pilot as last Fall's article mentioned, I figured the next thing to construct would be the ash pan. It was big, heavy, and after it was made I could install it and get it out of my way. Off I went, blueprints in hand, to my local steel dealer. We sat down and I started the process of learning

what these guys can do with pantographs and the like. Frankly, I was amazed. To steel men, working with steel is like any other person working with cardboard. Where I thought that cutting out pieces for ash pan hinges, specially cut parts and the like would be a huge project, to them it is simply a matter of knowing what was needed, feeding it into a data base of some sort, picking up the steel and putting it on an enormous table that sits over thousands of gallons of water. With the flick of a switch a torch fired up on the pantograph and went right to cutting that plate of steel into little pieces and special shapes. This was really neat! Before going to the steel dealer's, I had visions of just getting a huge chunk of plate, having to cut it by

*Continued on page 4*



The **Sagebrush Headlight** newsletter is published quarterly by the Nevada State Railroad Museum and distributed to members of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum as a benefit of their annual dues.

The museum is an agency of the  
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### NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

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**www.nevadaculture.org**

Open Daily 8:30 to 4:30

Except Nov. 23, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1

Admission: Adult \$4, Senior \$3

Children younger than 18 FREE

This issue of the *Sagebrush Headlight* welcomes back the writing of Dan Markoff. In our Fall 2006 issue, Dan described his extensive research into *Eureka*, locomotive No. 4 of the three-foot gauge Eureka & Palisade Railroad, and his record-keeping as he disassembled it at his home in Las Vegas. Dan continues the saga in this issue, describing the start-up of the restoration process itself. Also in this issue Kenneth Rhode of Idaho Falls, ID describes what he learned from a V&T document acquired in 1950.

Nevada has a new Governor and the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs has a new Director. Please see page 4 to learn more about Department Director Michael Fischer. Upon the December 15, 2006 retirement of Dr. Wallace A. Steffan, Peter D. Barton became Acting Administrator of the Division of Museums and History. Frank Ackerman is Acting Museum Director for the Nevada State Railroad Museum.

**Reminder: Submissions for the Summer issue of the *Sagebrush Headlight* are due Friday, June 1, 2007.**

### NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

#### STEAM-UPS

**Saturday/Sunday, May 12 & 13, Mothers' Day**

**Saturday/Sunday/Monday, May 26, 27 & 28,**

**Memorial Day Weekend**

**Saturday/Sunday June 9 & 10; 16 & 17, Fathers' Day**

**June 30 & July 1; July 14 & 15 and 28 & 29.**

**Wednesday, July 4, Independence Day.**

Trains depart daily from the historic Wabuska Depot,  
10:00 am till 4:00 pm

Steam Train Fares:

Adults- \$5.00, seniors (65 and above)-\$4.00,

Children 6-11- \$3.00, Five and under FREE

FNSRM Members ride half-fare with a membership card

**Schedules Subject to Change**

Planning is underway for the 36th Annual Nevada Railroad History Symposium in Carson City. Symposium sessions will take place Friday and Saturday **October 19- 20, 2007**. This year's Co-Chairmen are Bill Glenn of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum and Frank Ackerman, Curator of Education at the Nevada State Railroad Museum.

**The Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum collect railroad periodicals from 1950 or earlier, as well as railroad books, for resale in support of our mission. To donate these items, please contact:**

**Ann or John North at (775)786-4303**

**OR: jsnorth@sbcglobal.net**

**Receipts available on request. Donated publications that are needed for the museum's reference library will be conveyed to the museum.**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Here is another *Sagebrush Headlight* and another message. Time sure seems to fly by these days. Spring is almost here and activities are starting to pick up around the museum and the need for more volunteers is increasing. As always, please remember that your support and cooperation is imperative to the success of the operations and programs that are conducted by the museum and its staff. Without the volunteers the museum would not be the fine institution that it is and it could not carry out the outstanding programs and events that it does.

With the coming of spring also comes the yearly steam train and motorcar safety training classes. This year that highly awaited and eagerly anticipated event is scheduled for April 21, 2007 with the makeup date of April 28, 2007. Remember, everyone who is interested in working either of those two activities, it is mandatory that you attend one of the two sessions. As always, I am sure that Chris de Witt will make it informative and entertaining.

Membership is again going to be of a prime concern and Stan Cronwall and his team will be working all the major events and many of the minor ones as well. Again, he can use all of the assistance that he can get. Remember, it is the membership dues that make things happen and assist in all of the programs and events at the museum. Therefore, it is most important that we keep our membership growing and also keep the current members enrolled. Please help and support Stan with his duties in attracting new members by volunteering for some of those membership drives. Those efforts will be greatly appreciated by all.

Here's looking forward to seeing everyone during the coming months. Good luck.

—Ronald J. Allen

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## SPOTLIGHT ON JIM HALL

Steam crew member Jim Hall, a volunteer since May 2002, works most weekends throughout the operating season. Sunday afternoons in the off season usually find him traveling from the depths of Smith Valley to escort people around the Interpretive Center and Annex (he claims to have a great love for trains and all their workings but secretly we think he has a lucky quarter machine at the Nugget that draws him up here on Sundays).

After a couple of years in the Army stationed for the most part in the Netherlands, Jim spent 25 years with the Los Angeles Fire Department. After retiring in 1993, he took a tour of the country visiting every train museum and railroad yard he could find. With this knowledge behind him he interacts with our museum visitors to the fullest extent. Rarely does a museum visitor mention that he has seen this place or that, that Jim is not able to say "I've been there," sparking instant recognition and reaction from that visitor. While still with the fire department, he occasionally had managed to do railroad-type work for movies and TV commercials. In 1998 he spent two and a half months working on railroad operations for the movie *Wild, Wild West* starring Will Smith and Kevin Kline which came out the following year. He still speaks proudly of that experience. Later he worked on several episodes of the TV series *the X-Files*.

Long story short, Jim is a valuable asset to our museum – we couldn't do Sunday afternoons without him. Thanks, Jim.

—John Frink





## Governor Jim Gibbons has Appointed Michael Fischer to Serve as Director of the Department of Cultural Affairs

“Nevada’s rich history and heritage continues to garner worldwide recognition, largely because of the work of the Department of Cultural Affairs. Our libraries, museums and art serve as valuable resources that enrich the lives of Nevadans and all those who visit the Silver State,” said Governor Gibbons. “Mike Fischer is well known and respected for his knowledge of our state and its unique history. I am confident that his commitment to the preservation of our state’s western heritage will provide the Department of Cultural Affairs with exceptional leadership.”

Born and raised in Reno, Nevada, Fischer is a member of a number of local organizations, such as the Western Folk life Center, Elko Cowboy Poetry Gathering, where he served 10 years on the Board of Directors and four as Chairman; the Douglas County Historical Society, of which he is a life member and served two years as President; the University of Nevada Alumni Capitol Chapter, of which he served as President from 1984-1985; the University of Nevada Alumni Council Board of Directors; and the H.F. Dangberg Home Ranch State Park Steering Committee for master planning and building restoration.

“I’m honored by Governor Gibbons’ appointment and humbled by my duty to the people of Nevada. I look forward to working with the Department’s excellent staff and bringing my own experience to



help this department serve people even better. I’ve been involved in the pursuit of history and art all my adult life and I relish the opportunity to make them come alive for all Nevadans,” said Michael Fischer.

After graduating from Reno High School and The University of Nevada, Reno, Fischer received his dental degree (D.D.S., 1975) from the University of Southern California. On being appointed Director, he said, “It’s something that I’ve looked forward to doing my entire life and a job that will become a labor of love for me.”

*Continued from page 1*

hand with a torch, and then spend countless hours grinding my spastic cut lines true. Yet here each piece came out exactly to the proper dimensions and almost ready to be assembled. I still had to drill many holes in the ash pan parts for the rivets. That in itself was no small task, believe me. Then I had to rivet the parts together. Now, you may ask, “why did he not just arc-weld the parts together?” That is a very good question, and I asked it of myself. But I got to thinking: if the *Eureka* is to be accurately restored, then as many processes as possible should be used to stay true to the original design. That is not to say that welding would never be used, but it should be used only when there was no practical alternative. I wanted to maintain as much as possible of the original fabric of the locomotive. More on that later.

After I got all the pieces back home, I had to drill them as noted. Then it was necessary to make a special anvil so I could pound the rivets into place.

For this I got a very large piece of an I-beam, and welded to the top of it different parts that could be used to buck the rivets when I started to drive them. I then found a suitable hammer, which turned out to be a five-pound single-jack. Every so often, when I would feel particularly frisky, I would go out and pound a bunch of rivets into the plates and attach the components of the ash pan. After a while, it started taking shape. Before I knew it, I had a wood-burning ash pan— another new part for the locomotive. I set it aside, with all the other stuff piled everywhere, and proceeded to make the grates.

Wood-burning grates are usually made of cast iron. But in this instance I was not going to cast them. Instead, I decided to make the grates by welding the parts together. Why weld grates and not the ash pan? Well, first of all I was thinking of problems if a repair had to be made. Cast iron does not weld very well. So if some damage occurred to a grate, the whole thing would have to come out before it could be replaced. Also, there are four separate grates.



I would have to make a pattern for each grate, because they are all slightly different. I had talked with Chris de Witt at the Nevada State Railroad Museum and had learned that he had welded-up the grates for the *Inyo*. That was good enough for me. Besides, the only weldments would be under the grates, inside the ash pan. From the surface, they look exactly like cast iron. Consider this a concession to the shortness of life.

Next came the grate bearers. They were rather simple to make because they are merely large pieces of steel that are angled to hold up the grates. The hard part was crawling under the locomotive to see if there were still holes in the mud ring where the bearers would bolt up. The holes were in place from when the original grate bearers were installed, but the threads in them had practically disintegrated.

The only way to fix these, really, was to drill them out a little larger to make sure I was into good metal, and then to thread the holes to take a heli-coil. That was the only way to maintain the original dimensions of the bolts that held up the bearers. To say the least, it was literally an enormous pain in the neck to crawl under there, hold a drill with a one-inch bit, and drill those holes out. But, after enough time and a few well chosen words, and holding my tongue just so in my mouth, I got it done. Everything fit together perfectly. I thought it was a good idea to get all these things installed as early as possible so there would be less and less that I had to hop over.

While all this steel work was going on, my wood working department (me) was also in full swing. *Eureka's* cab had been badly damaged in the fire, and the only thing usable from it was the hardware. As for the wood, it was burned – and while it looked like a cab when assembled, it also looked fried. I had no choice but to build a new cab.

While I had considerable experience working with wood in making gun stocks, I did not have a clue how to build a cab. I needed to get some training in this department.

One day, I noticed that at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas a course was offered in the evening on advanced woodworking. Ah! That was it! I went out to Woodworkers Emporium, where the class was to be taught, and met Christian Brispiere. Christian owned the Woodworkers Emporium and would be the instructor. I looked around his shop, amazed at the array of large woodworking equipment he had and his incredibly beautiful work. This was the place for me. I promptly signed up.

In the meantime, I had studied the blueprints of the cab *ad nauseum*. When we met for the first class, Christian went around and asked everyone what project they wanted to work on. Most everyone had chairs, cabinets, and stuff like that. He came to me, and I said I wanted to build a cab for a steam locomotive. I think Christian thought I was talking about a scale-model live steamer. But then he asked as a second thought how big it was. I told him. You can not imagine the look on everyone's face when I told them that it was full size, to go onto a locomotive that was built in 1875. I passed around a picture of the *Sonoma*, *Eureka's* sister engine at the California State Railroad Museum. There was a lot of head shaking and questions. It was clear that Christian thought maybe this project was a little too big and over my head. Well, so did I, but so what.

Class began. Everyone worked diligently on their projects and made some very beautiful items. By the end of the semester, I had made the largest mountains of sawdust by far and did not have anything assembled. But I did have a large collection of cab parts that I could not have made at home. I was very satisfied with myself. Christian actually became very intrigued with the entire project and was extremely helpful. In fact, he told me that if there was anything he could do after the class ended, that I could use his shop to do it. It was a very generous offer from a man who is extremely skilled in the finest of cabinet making. There would be many times in the future that I took him up on his offer, using his shop to make many components for which I did not have the equipment. As a result, we became good friends.

Although making the parts for the cab was a lot of work, finding the walnut wood for it was an adventure in itself. Many of the smaller pieces of rough lumber I could find locally. But, as for the bigger ones, such as the front and rear plates of the cab, and other parts, the prices I was being quoted here in Las Vegas made me choke. There was no way I could afford the prices being quoted here, so I had to come up with some other plan.

I used to build muzzle-loading rifles years ago. I used to get my gunstock blanks from a fellow in Tennessee. One day I called him up and asked if he had any clear walnut lumber that was 2 1/2 inches thick and fourteen inches wide and about ten feet long that I needed. He said he did not because he was retiring, had sold off his saw mill and was going to take it easy. He asked why I wanted such large pieces, and I told him I was given a number to call in Council Bluffs, Iowa and told to talk with a particular person and tell him what I was up to.

*Continued on page 9*



## March 15, 1877: A Day on the Virginia & Truckee Railroad

By Kenneth Rohde

The Virginia & Truckee Railroad was completed between Carson City and Virginia City in 1869. From Virginia City's mines high on Sun Mountain the V&T hauled many tons of silver ore to the mills along the Carson River. Freight to Virginia City consisted mostly of firewood, mine timbers and lumber for construction. After being extended to Reno in 1872, the V&T hauled in mining machinery and other manufactured goods from its interchange with the Central Pacific. As a bonus the wealthy owners and the working folks could get to Virginia City in comfort.

During a trip on the Virginia & Truckee from Reno to Minden and back in June of 1949, I was fortunate to purchase at Carson City the Train Register for March 15, 1877. This Register was kept on two 20-by-15-inch sheets of quality paper. The first sheet was used to record the activities prior to noon; the second, the PM activities. Each sheet was preprinted with a heading and with the stations listed down the center. Southbound trains were recorded to the left of center and northbound trains to the right. There was space at the bottom to record consists of freight trains and notes about work trains. From this Register, a lot can be learned about the operation of the V&T in 1877.

Neither the construction nor the operation of the V&T's 31-mile line from Reno (elevation 4490 feet) to Carson City (elevation 4660 feet) was challenging. Beyond Carson City, the railroad ran for about ten miles along the Carson River, but then climbed abruptly up Sun Mountain to Virginia City, gaining 1,575 feet of elevation in eleven miles. The total curvature on this segment was equivalent to seventeen complete circles. We will see in our analysis of the Train Register that it was on this last segment of the line that the heavy lifting was done.

### The Trains

Trains outbound from Reno were assigned odd numbers; those in the opposite direction, even numbers. No. 1 was a morning through passenger train from Reno to Virginia City. Those headed toward Reno had even Numbers. No. 2 was an evening passenger train from Virginia City to Carson City; No. 4 a morning passenger train from Carson City to Reno and No. 6 a morning passenger or mixed train from Virginia City to Carson City that continued to Reno in the afternoon.

Scheduled freight trains included Nos. 5, 7 and 15 from Reno to Carson City; Nos. 7, 9, 13, 19 and 21

from Carson City to Virginia City; Nos. 8, 12, 14, 16 and 18 from Virginia City to Carson City; and No. 10 from Carson City to Reno. On March 15, 1877 a freight extra from Carson City to Reno also operated.

On March 15, 1877 eight trains went up and down the hill to Virginia City. Another terminated at Gold Hill, two miles below Virginia City. The Register shows that most meets on the hill took place at Scales, between Gold Hill and Silver City. Five trains ran southbound from Reno to Carson City; four ran northbound. One of these turned back at Huffakers, seven miles south of Reno – more about that one below.



*Photo Courtesy of Kenneth Sanborn.*

### The Locomotives

Twelve locomotives were in service on this day. *Nevada, Genoa, Virginia, Aurora* and *Reno* were used between Reno and Carson City. *Tahoe, Merrimac, Santiago, Esmeralda, Humboldt, Truckee, Inyo* and *Genoa* were used on the hill. *Genoa, Aurora* and *Inyo* were in passenger service. Of the eight trains to Virginia City, five were double-headed. Two pairs of locomotives (*Santiago* and *Esmeralda*; *Tahoe* and *Merrimac*) made two trips up the hill. Carson City was the hub of locomotive and train operations. The great engine house, which in my time was a place of pilgrimage, was located there.

### The Crews

The conductor, engineer or engineers, and the locomotives are identified on the register for each train. Each engineer worked the same locomotive all day and each conductor worked with the same engineer – or engineers, on doubleheaders, all day.

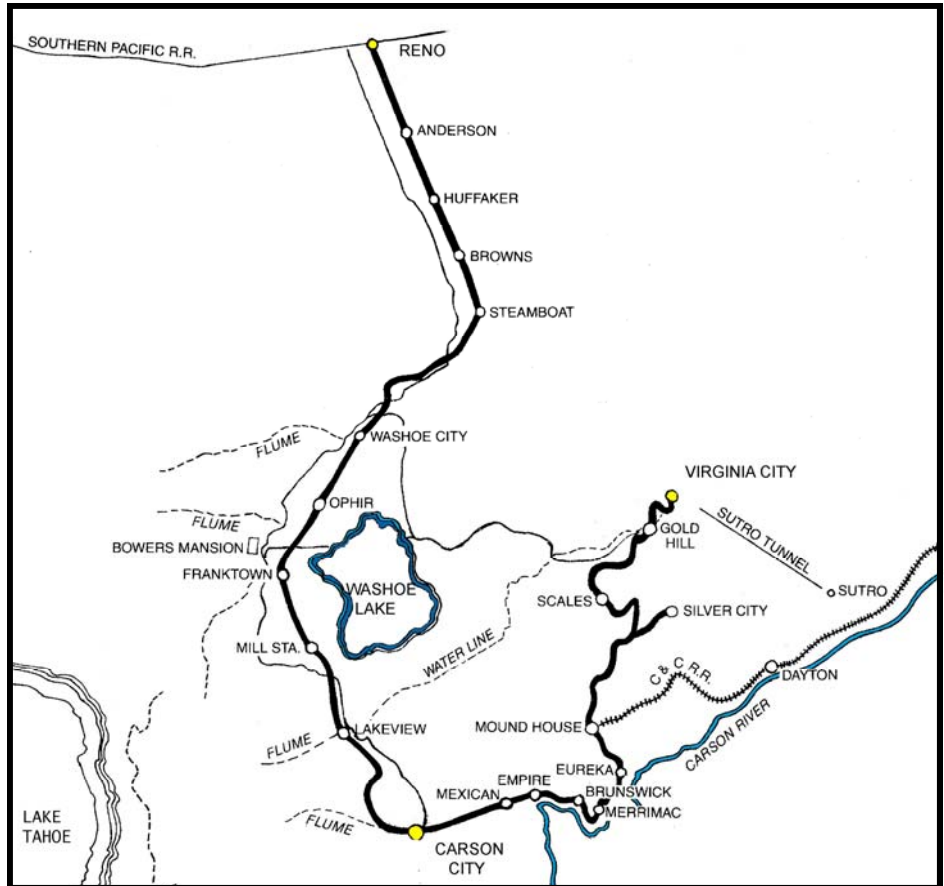


On March 15, 1877 six engineers with three pairs of locomotives took the heavy trains from Carson City up to Virginia City and back.

Engineer Rogers departed Reno for Virginia with passenger train No. 1 at 7:35 AM and finished his work day when he arrived in Carson with train No. 2 at 7:20 PM. Engineer Ryan, with the Santiago, left Virginia at 6:55 AM for two round trips down and up the hill and finished work at Gold Hill at 7:57 PM. Engineers Snyder and Gifford left Carson at 8:12 AM for Virginia and made two round trips up and down the hill arriving at Mound House at 7:48 PM. Although they were reported as leaving Mound House at 7:50 PM the record ends for the day. While this may be a discrepancy in the Register, it also may be that they did not reach Carson City until after midnight – a sixteen-hour day. Obviously, twelve-hour-plus days were common for train crews.

A local freight departed Carson City at 6:00 AM, worked for more than an hour at Steamboat and arrived at Huffakers at 9:45 AM. The locomotive and crew returned with train No. 11, which departed Huffakers at 3:53 PM and arrived in Carson City at 5:45 PM: another twelve-hour workday. Undoubtedly there was switching to do at Huffakers since it was the end of a log-flume from the Sierra forests. Wood fueled both Virginia City and the V&T at the time.

For perspective, we can relate these average speeds to trains on another mountain railroad that some of us traveled in the 1950s. Using Denver & Rio Grande Western's time tables in the May 1950 *Official Guide of the Railways* and allowing an hour for station stops and meets we get an average speed of 24 MPH for the passenger train *San Juan*. The Wednesday-only mixed train between Durango and Silverton averaged 13 MPH.



The Virginia & Truckee Railroad of 1877.

NSRM Map.

### Approximate Average Speeds and Times between Terminals

The Register gives sufficient information to calculate the speed of each train by subtracting the reported halt times at stations from terminal-to-terminal times. Through passenger train No. 1 ran the 31 miles from Reno to Carson in ninety minutes at an average speed of 21 MPH. Its run to Virginia City required another 85 minutes at an average speed of fifteen MPH. The heavy, double-headed freights took about two hours and twenty minutes to climb from Carson City to Virginia City at a speed of ten MPH. They typically came down at about the same speed. The fastest speed calculated on this day was 22 MPH for a light freight train between Carson City and Reno. The slowest was nine MPH, for two heavy freights between Carson City and Virginia City.

### Freight Loads Up and Down (and Empties Up) the Mountain

The Register's extensive footnotes tell us just what the V&T hauled to Virginia on March 15, 1877. There were 54 cars of wood, presumably fuel; 12 cars of lumber, perhaps some for use as mine timbers; three cars of hay; two cars of machinery and two cars of merchandise. Ten mines can be identified among the consignees. A chart at the lower right corner of the Register lists the cars of silver ore and their consignees. On this day, 83 cars of ore were consigned to seven mills at or near Empire at the foot of the grade. Cars presumed empty include 83 to be distributed to shippers as well as thirteen "foreign" cars to be interchanged at Reno.

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Railroad History on the World Wide Web**The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society and *Railroad History***

*The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, Inc. is the oldest organization in North America devoted to railroad history, and among the first anywhere to pursue formal studies in the history of technology. Its object is to promote research and to encourage preservation of documentation pertinent to business history, finance, labor history, and biography as well as technology. The Society publishes the semi-annual journal Railroad History, copies of which are distributed as a membership benefit to members of the Friends of the Nevada State Railroad Museum.*



The R&LHS website includes a Reference Section at <http://rlhs.org/reference.htm>. It was started in 2003 and is intended to become an important source of railroad historical information. It is a product of the cooperative effort of R&LHS members. Two parts of this section are described in boxes on this page. Their URLs are cited.

### **Guide to Railroad Records at the National Archives**

[<http://rlhs.org/research.htm>](http://rlhs.org/research.htm)

As a service to the railroad history community, the R&LHS here presents National Archives Reference Information Paper No. 91, a comprehensive survey of the holdings of the National Archives of railroad-related material. This document was compiled by David Pfeiffer, archivist and transportation records specialist at National Archives II, located in College Park, MD. On this page are the cover page, table of contents and preface to the paper. The remainder of the paper is organized into separate files, each accessible by a link from the table of contents, and also chained together by a succession of links to facilitate browsing through the entire document sequentially. This approach was taken to minimize the access time to any given part of the document. It has the disadvantage that the entire document cannot be searched in one operation. There is an Index at the end of the document which identifies the section of the document in which each entry is found, and the index may be used in that manner, by looking up the part number and section, then going directly to it.

Other items accessible through hyperlinks from the opening page of the Reference Section include a **Description of North American Railroad Routes, Infrastructure and Traffic**; a summary of **Early American Railroad History**; the **LOCOPIX™ Index to Published Steam Locomotive Pictures**; an index of **Railroad Nicknames and Slogans**; and a list of **Winners of the Railroad Book, Article, Photography, and Senior Achievement Awards** during the 25 years that the R&LHS Awards Program has existed.

### **The Railroad History Index**

[<http://rlhs.org/ridxtit.htm>](http://rlhs.org/ridxtit.htm)

*Railroad History* and its predecessor before 1972, *The R&LHS Bulletin* have since 1921 been the premier scholarly journal devoted exclusively to North American railroad history. Many of the earlier issues have become collector's items commanding high prices, the only journal of its type about which that can be said. Its pages are a treasure-trove of historical information, much not published elsewhere. *The Railroad History Index 1921-1984*, compiled by Tom Taber, has been converted using optical character recognition. An extension has been compiled by Adrian Ettlinger under the guidance of Mr. Taber, who lent his collection for the purpose. It is the intention to continue the updating of this index as additional volumes of *Railroad History* are published. Search categories are as follows:

#### **Articles**

[Authors](#)

[Canadian Railways](#)

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#### **Book Reviews**

[Topics in Railroad History](#)

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[Locomotives, U.S.](#)

[Electric and Cable Railways, U.S.](#)

[Canadian Railways](#)

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After finding what you're looking for in this index, you next must locate the pertinent issue of *Railroad History* in a major library or locally through inter-library loan.

The Nevada State Railroad Museum's collection of *Railroad History* is incomplete. NSRM is always interested in obtaining additional issues. For more information contact Curator of History Wendell Huffman at [<wwhuffma@clan.lib.nv.us>](mailto:wwhuffma@clan.lib.nv.us).

—Frank Ackerman



*Continued from page 5*

When I called the number, I got Midwest Walnut. I asked for Jack Lawless (a name a lawyer can easily remember). I told him that I needed some clear walnut in large sizes and proceeded to give him the dimensions and quantity. Jack told me that Midwest Walnut only deals in thousand board foot lots of walnut and only supplies large manufacturers. I was crestfallen.

Then he asked me what I was building. I told him. He said to my surprise that he was building a live-steam model of a 4-4-0 and wanted to know everything about what I had. We then had a pleasant conversation about old steam locomotives. At the end of our conversation, he told me that I could have whatever I needed and have it at his cost!

I gave Jack the list and a few weeks later I was told to go to the Union Pacific railroad yards here in Las Vegas, as there was a shipment of walnut waiting for me. Jack and Midwest Walnut had saved the day. When I arrived at the UP yards there were the most beautiful, huge pieces of clear walnut I could have ever hoped for. The wood was gorgeous.

I took the load home and carefully stored the wood until it was time to lay out the cuts at Woodworkers Emporium. I was extremely careful, as I did not want to blow the job at this point. Slowly, but surely, over a two year period the new cab for *Eureka* began taking shape. I remember when I first assembled the pieces on the patio. I was very proud, and the cab was beautiful. I had to say to myself, "Dan, you old dog, you did it!"

After doing the fit-up of the cab on the patio, I disassembled it and put it away until it was ready to be put on *Eureka*. There was still a helluva lot of work to do on other things. As time went by I cleaned parts from the locomotive. That seemed to go on forever. Come to think of it, it did go on forever. The links were filthy with grime, as were the eccentrics and other parts of the valve system. I not only had to clean them, but I also had to polish them back to their original luster. As I did so, I would put them in boxes for storage. Then there were the domes. The domes come apart and except

I thoroughly cleaned all of these, then primed them. There was no place left in my shop to store these and other finished items, so I took them into the house. I stored the dome parts under our bed. The bell was put next to the television in the living room. This was what my wife Ditty called "locomotive creep." The parts were creeping, ever-so-slowly into the house. For years, we slept over the dome parts. But it was no problem. They stayed quiet at night.

However, it became more of a problem when I got to doing the gold-leaf work and pin-striping on the domes, because then the parts were on our dining room table. My entire home, not just the engine house with *Eureka*, had been turned into a workshop.

Little by little, things were getting done. Even though I originally thought I would simply work from the front of *Eureka* to the back, it did not work out that way. Sometimes I would get tired of working on one phase of it, and would decide to work on another instead. In a strange sort of a way it was

the variety of different things that had to be done that kept me from getting bored. When I got tired of working in iron, I could work with wood. When I got tired of working with my hands, I could study blueprints of parts and plan out what to do next, or whenever. When I got tired of working on the locomotive altogether, I would look at the piles of parts all over and wonder to myself, what the hell did I get myself into.

At times it was overwhelming. All I could think about was how many parts there were, how much work there was, and how long would it all take and would I ever see the end of it. I realized after a while that if I looked at the entire locomotive, it was overpowering in its ability to scare me and to make me question my sanity for ever having started. Eventually it came to me that if I looked at each part as one small project at a time, then it was really very manageable. All I had to do was keep myself focused on each project, finish it, set it aside, and move on to the next. It was a good analysis of how not to lose your marbles. But there were still an awful lot of parts everywhere that had to be done.

**Next time: Connections.**



*Eureka's partly assembled new headlight in front of the fireplace at the author's home.*



# The Central Pacific Railroad and the Comstock

*Exhibition at the Nevada Historical Society March 23 – December 14, 2007*

The Nevada Historical Society is hosting the exhibition *The Central Pacific Railroad and the Comstock* which highlights Nevada's first railroad and an important part of the nation's first transcontinental rail road. The exhibition will open with a public reception March 23 at 5:30PM and will be on display through December 14, 2007 in the Society's Changing Gallery.

The exhibition was created through a partnership between the Nevada Historical Society and the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City. It illustrates how the discovery of the Comstock Lode in late 1859 defined the route of the Central Pacific Railroad. Maps, photographs, artwork, artifacts, and newspaper clippings will be exhibited.

"The construction of the first transcontinental railroad was to the 19<sup>th</sup> century what putting a man on the moon was to the 20<sup>th</sup> century—almost exactly 100 years later," said Wendell Huffman, Curator of History for the Nevada State Railroad Museum. "There were people alive in 1869 when the railroad was completed who could remember when the United States barely reached the Appalachian Mountains. Once the railroad was completed, people who had taken four months to walk to California in the Gold Rush could revisit their old homes in a matter of days. Nevada residents could reach Sacramento or San Francisco in hours in relative comfort."

## About the Central Pacific Railroad

The Central Pacific was incorporated in 1861, commenced construction at Sacramento in 1863, reached Nevada in December 1867, and was completed with a connection to the Union Pacific at Promontory Summit, Utah in May 1869.

The Sierra Nevada represented a geographical barrier to early Nevada, separating its citizens from markets for their products and sources for the supplies they needed. The territory and subsequent state's pressing need was for improved communication through that mountain range. Lawmakers were so anxious for a railroad connection through the Sierra that the even put a train on the state's seal in 1864, more than three years before the railroad actually reached Nevada.

Reno was created by the Central Pacific Railroad in the spring of 1868 as their depot for the Comstock. In 1872 the Virginia & Truckee Railroad completed its connection between Reno and Virginia City by way of Carson City.



## About the Nevada Historical Society

The Nevada Historical Society was founded in 1904 and is the oldest state museum. Programs include an active exhibition schedule, public programs and docent-guided tours. The museum's research room, with its extensive collection of Nevada information and photographs, is open to the public from 12 to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Exhibit galleries and the museum store are open 10AM–5PM, Monday through Saturday. Admission is \$3 for adults ages 17 and over, \$2 for seniors. Children and members are free.

The Nevada Historical Society is one of seven museums managed by the State Division of Museums and History, an agency of the Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs. The Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs serves Nevada's citizens and visitors through cultural and information management, presentation and promotion of cultural resources, and education. The Department also includes the State Office of Historic Preservation, Nevada State Library and Archives and the Nevada Arts Council. For more information on the Department of Cultural Affairs, please call the Public Information Officer at (775) 687-8323 or visit the department's website at [www.NevadaCulture.org](http://www.NevadaCulture.org).



**SELECTIONS FROM THE MUSEUM STORE . . .**

*Our Museum Store specializes in railroad books for adults and children, Nevada history books, train videos, audio recordings, toys, train models, hats and apparel, railroad pins and jewelry, train novelties and souvenirs, note cards, artwork and calendars.*

*As always, we invite and encourage you to visit the store in person for your shopping convenience. But, if you don't have the opportunity to visit anytime soon, we offer a few of our interesting merchandise selections on this page, available by mail order.*

*Your telephone or written inquiries about any railroad merchandise you may be looking for are always welcome. Please direct your requests to store manager Rich Reitnauer, (775) 687-8292. And remember, Friends of NSRM members are entitled to a 15% discount off all museum store purchases. Proceeds from sales are used by NSRM to fund a variety of museum projects and public interpretive programs.*

**NEW ITEMS FROM OUR STORE SHELVES:**

**UNION PACIFIC: VOLUME 1, 1862-1893** (Klein), 797 pp., \$24.95. ITEM #101350

The Union Pacific Railroad is renowned as America's first transcontinental railroad and is one of the strongest companies in the railroad industry today. The driving of the golden spike in Promontory, Utah, in 1869 marked not only the opening of the continent to settlement but also the transformation of the United States from an agricultural nation to an industrial one. Maury Klein, one of America's foremost railroad historians, re-creates the powerful personalities and dramatic events that led to the construction of this legendary railroad. Illustrated with more than one hundred historic photographs and maps, the book details the feat of engineering and human strength that conquered the terrain of the desert and mountains and also the colorful wheelings and dealings that were waged in executive boardrooms in New York and Boston and in the chambers of Congress as dreamers and scoundrels, politicians and patriots forged a pioneering enterprise in transportation.

**UNION PACIFIC, VOLUME 2, 1894-1969** (Klein), 654 pp., \$24.95. ITEM #101353

The second volume in the history of the Union Pacific begins after the financial panic of 1893, one of the worst depressions Americans had yet experienced, which pushed the railroad into bankruptcy. Here, Klein examines the complex challenges faced by the Union Pacific in the new century—the expanding role of government and its restrictive regulations, the growth of labor unions, the devastating effects of two world wars, and the growing competition from new modes of transportation—and how, under the innovative and influential leadership of Edward H. Harriman, the Union Pacific again played the role of industrial pioneer.

**SUNSET LIMITED: THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN WEST, 1850-1930** (Orsi), 615 pp., \$29.95. ITEM #103827

The only major U.S. railroad to be operated by westerners and the only railroad built from west to east, the Southern Pacific acquired a unique history and character. It also acquired a reputation, especially in California, as a railroad that people loved to hate. This magisterial history tells the full story of the Southern Pacific for the first time, shattering myths about the company that have prevailed to this day. This landmark account explores the railroad's development and influence—especially as it affected land settlement, agriculture, water policy, and the environment—and offers a new perspective on the tremendous, often surprising, role the company played in shaping the American West.

**TOURIST TRAINS GUIDEBOOK** (from the Publisher of *TRAINS MAGAZINE*), 277 pp., \$18.95. ITEM #101289

One hundred fifty reviews of great train rides and museums: what to do, when to go, activities and directions.

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*To place phone orders, please call (775) 687-6953 (9:00am-4:00pm daily).*

*Address mail orders to Nevada State Railroad Museum, 2180 S. Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701.*

*Please include your name, street address, city/state/zip code, and your daytime telephone number. Members of the Friends of NSRM are entitled to a 15 percent discount off all merchandise. Please add \$3.50 for shipping charges. If paying by either Visa or MasterCard, include your credit card number and expiration date.*

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## *UPCOMING EVENTS*

**March 23 through December 14** at the Nevada Historical Society, Reno

### ***The Central Pacific Railroad and the Comstock***

Exhibition Presented by  
the Nevada State Railroad Museum and the Nevada Historical Society

#### *Wednesday Evening Programs*

April 11	<i>Railroad Rhythms</i>	Presented by The Little Toots
May 9	<i>A Tale of Two Railroads and NSRM: a Story of the First Transcontinental Railroad</i>	Presented by Russ Tanner
June 13	<i>Military Railway Service in India During the Second World War</i>	Presented by Charles Kinney

Evening programs are held at the Museum's Interpretive Center on the second Wednesday of each month except as noted. Programs begin promptly at 7:00 PM (or as noted) and are free to the public.